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Ashanti Alston
Childhood & The Psychological Dimension of Revolution
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Childhood & The Psychological Dimension of Revolution

Ashanti Alston

Contents

gle in Babylon) is to help each one and each other SEE, as penetrating and broadly as we can, the Masked Oppressor within us. These self-hating, self-enslaving mechanisms which have become an unconscious and invisible force is operating off of our induced fears of LIVING FULLY, affectively restricting our capacities for struggle and freedom. We've got to break through if we are going to change ourselves into capable, human peoples who are determined to take responsibility for creating radical social-changing lifestyles.

Reading Is A Must! SO we must seek out the kinds of information that can show us:

1) How we each are prevented by the society (through culture) and how we prevent our own selves (internalizing culture) from developing our potentials as human beings and revolutionaries, and

2) How we might bring forth those buried potentials and capacities to be free, constructive, creative, willing, loving, independent, communal, responsible, playful, sensual, honest, assertive, playful, and revolutionizing.

24 March 18 A.D.M. (March 23, 1983)

Final editing, June 30, 2002, 37 ADM

The following was written back in March 18 ADM (18 years After The Death of Malcolm). I was still a Black Liberation Army prisoner-of-war. This period of reflection shows a developing anti-authoritarian awareness coming out of a strong Black Panther Marxist-Leninist-Maoist influence. Why? Because we, as a movement, had suffered a defeat at the hands of the External Enemy. But we had not sufficiently looked at how deep was our own internalized oppression and the part that WE PLAYED in our own undoing. At this time, the Frankfort School of radical psychologies, radical feminism and anarchism, provided me with some powerful insights into the psychological and structural reasons for our failures. Reflection is so important and prison gives you a great opportunity to REFLECT. So I read my ass off and gave my own past experiences some deep thought. Some truths are hard to accept, like when you see that you played a part in your own demise. The writings of James and Grace Lee Boggs inspired me to constantly take on the responsibility of "stretching" the meaning and practice of HUMAN BE-ING in our present times. In doing so I had also to face what it means when you don't stretch: YOU REPEAT HISTORY. So, I offer these thoughts. Bear with my language and all the repetitious phrasings. But most of all, GET MY POINT!

Revolution in our lifetime!

AO

Childhood & The Psychological Dimension of Revolution

24 March 18 A.D.M. (March 23, 1983)

PEOPLE WHO TALK ABOUT REVOLUTION AND CLASS STRUGGLE WITHOUT REFERING EXPLICITLY TO EVERYDAY LIFE, WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS SUBVERSIVE ABOUT LOVE AND WHAT IS POSITIVE IN THE REFUSAL OF

CONSTRAINTS, SUCH PEOPLE HAVE A CORPSE IN THEIR MOUTHS

RAUL VANEIGEM, from THE REVOLUTION OF EVERYDAY LIFE

I had a typical upbringing where the inner-city was Nigger-town with all the customs and traditions of racism, sexism and powerlessness. You come into this kind of world ignorant but increasingly learning about people, society, roles and duties. You recognize the Supreme Authority of the Whites, the Rich and "God," of the poleece in the streets. Of the preachers and teachers in the churches and schools, and of the parents and older folks in the home and neighborhood.

Though my first "authority" figures were my parents (and older brothers and sisters) I soon found out that beyond the world of home, there were others in authoritarian positions over me. But whatever or whoever the authority, the cultural lesson that tied it all together was the one that began in the home: Respect and Obey your Parents! Do as we Say. We know how to Raise you." Disrespect and disobedience was not to be tolerated. Funny, you didn't like it as a child, yet you found yourself following the same customs and traditions when you were in the role as Parent, as an Authority. It made your life as a child miserable in many respects with the roles and chores, the do's and don'ts and all. But, it was said to be Necessary if you were going to Fit In and Make It in this society.

No child just automatically conforms to such authoritarian raising, such methods. There is naturally rebellion and resistance. But you are just a child, weak and dependent upon those around you to "prepare" you for the real world. So what can you do but eventually submit, conform to their social designs? I am certain that I had to learn through this process of instilling Fear in me, to cement each lesson in my soul. Not like I got it much, but I didn't like to get my butt whupped, didn't like to be shouted at, threatened, ordered to stay in the house away from friends and games and al. They were upset with

Talk about struggle, conflict? LIKE NOTHING YOU COULD HAVE IMAGINED. The living, potent knowledge available to us now, can help us to conduct this inner radical reconstruction that inescapably puts us through some hellified psychological and even biological changes. And this is just what we need!

"After difficulty comes ease." - The Quran

WHERE TO - WHAT NOW?

This calls for a different kind of boldness or courage. It impels you to confront and challenge not just the external enemy of all shapes, sizes and dress, but the internal enemy who is YOU, an yet NOT THE YOU you are silently SCREAMING to be. There is the need for the courage to seek out amongst ourselves the men, women and youngsters (regardless of race, sex, class or belief) who are at least INTERESTED and WIILING to venture on this journey (a rugged journey, mind you) in putting ourselves through, and having others of like interest put us through, the kinds of personal, emotionally upsetting, gut-wrenching experiences necessary to discover their selves and piece back together a human being fragmented by this oppressive culture. This is synonymous with being, becoming REVOLUTIONARY, which is synonymous with being at peace with one's self. Anyone whose attitude is that s/he is already revolutionary (or human) enough and don't need to go through no more changes is obviously a self-enslaved person who is satisfied with remaining stuck in the same old mold. That type of person cannot, and more than likely WILL NOT, help him/herself nor allow others to help her/him unless that particular negative anti-freedom attitude changes to one that is indicative of an OPENING to the world of positive "stimuli," goodness in people, enriching, liberating experiences, and the like.

So, the primary purpose of this paper (and my idea with others before me of the primary task of this stage of human strug-

bling foundation structure that is fragile, re-decorated, "should-abeencondemnedlongago" psychological tenements.

The problem is how to change the whole ghetto-ized or niggerized mind/body/soul chain system so that in self-discovery and development of wholesome, enriching and enlivening capacities, one can be better able to truly take hold of new, liberating ways of thinking and relating as in guiding principles and life concepts. Here we especially mean one's critical, emotional, sensual, creative and physical capacities in and for life per se. Does what we believe, do our behavior patterns inhibit, repress or distort the "fire of life? Or does one's beliefs and behavior promote and nurture that "born freedom," that potential primarily for creating higher, diverse forms of liberating, human natural relationships, cultural and sexual happiness, psychological self-determination - and as critical, for social revolutionary struggle, including the complex underground machinations called for?

In order to radically change the ghettoes, you have to get out the dynamite, the giant digging cranes, the ball crushers, power jacks, etc.. You have to carry through the tasks of blowing up, knocking down the old physical character of the ghetto. Then you have to keep on digging deep through the surface, past hidden layers of earth to prepare for a new, clean foundation. That is the concern here: preparing for a new, clean foundation for freedom. And we've got a lot of garbage and backed-up, antiquated sewer systems in our psychological characters to deal with. This is the PREPARATION of changing the Masked Character Structure.

Just like the construction workers, the re-construction of the character structure require us to DIG DEEP into the many layers of our personal pasts, for those hidden, buried potent capacities screaming to be free for living fully, for developing naturally towards the fullness, the wholeness of life. It is from this BASIS that the capacities for a mix of revolutionary life styles, including all its dangerous implications, should be developed.

my natural wild zest for life and mostly, all of their measures were designed to restrict it, that "wild zest." I didn't know but it was obvious that I had ongoing choices to make to please them, whether I liked it or not. Mama knows best - Papa knows best … but I didn't know a dam thing! Hell, I guess that I was just suppose to go along with the program. It was no question that when I did, it brought more rewards than punishment, and when faced with a choice between the two, man, you get tired of punishment! Without ever fully understanding why, you come to realize that the things you truly want, desire to do, think, say, feel … have got to be repressed, hidden and if done at all, done on the sly. Just can't be you. Why?

Once those customs and traditions become a part of a person they form a psychological "mask" quite unknowingly to the person. You come to don that mask reluctantly, as your every physical, mental and emotional fiber resists. But once its fastened on your face, on your soul, it functions just like your heart pumps blood, lungs air, or stomach digest food. You forget about, or repress the memories of, the traumatic experiences which created the mask, and go on through life not even realizing that it governs, influences, pulls and jerks your every physical, emotional and intellectual activity. It effectively cuts you off from being in direct touch with your true feelings, with your spontaneous contact with the outside world, with friends, with your energy, and with your curiosity about life in general.

Poor child has no idea that its dependency upon those who raise him/her is gonna cost him/her that natural, playful, soulful zest for life; its psychic and biological health and development twisted and suffocated by a series of traumatic experiences designed and invoked in the name of God and the American Way and good child-rearing practices to produce a powerless, dependent, fearful, self-enslaving, law-abiding citizens (first- and second-class). Its sad that parents don't see the real damage they inflect on their children in their rearing methods, but the end-result always show in the inability of people in gen-

eral to govern their own lives without an authoritarian figure hovering over them; it shows in their apathy, hopelessness and feelings of insignificance.

After the coup d'etat of the Family Institution over the natural freedom and aliveness of the child, that child is trained into an adulthood in which it will continue to repress freedom (its full human developmental capacities) and continue the whole process anew in its offspring. What was done to your parents in childhood, they did to you, and you, in turn, do it to yours.

And so on, never thinking about the harmful consequences of blindly carrying on traditions which distort our humanity. It is here, though, and in this way of words and behavior, that the sexism, racism, capitalism, the religious, intellectual and moral belief systems, as well as the lying, dishonesty, irresponsibility, emotional denial, liberalism, manipulation, egotism, slavishness, etc., are taught and passed on.

In sociology the process itself is called "socialization" or "enculturation." The object is to "civilize" the child and keep everyone bind to the traps of tradition and belief. But what it amounts to is a vast suppression of the force or fire of life within the child or population in general, because it is that "fire" which rebels against any kind of oppressive socialization which is not in harmony with the free development of a human being's potential for healthy, satisfying love, work and knowledge. What is wanted is a well-behaved, obedient, productive person who will NOT disturb nor question the Established Authoritarian Order, but will merely carry on as proscribed and arranged for generations.

Generally, there is one brief period in the human development cycle where we are, relatively, free; when the culture has not yet restricted, twisted, or distorted the natural, spontaneous Living Expressions of a thinking, feeling and doing human being. This period is from birth to 3, 4 or 5 years old. The child is "born free". This is when our emotional, physical and mental energies are most delightfully burning, most alive,

No one is immune to the psychic domination this oppressive monster, or "god", has over us. The invisible Mask maintains that domination, that blind addiction to authoritarianism. It represses the instinctual freedom desires of a person. This is true even when one is ALONE with NO VISIBLE political or police force near us. Like the slave who will not, WILL NOT run away from Massa when unchained and no physical obstacle in sight. The only obstacle is her/his personal fears, her/his mentality of fear … a fear that paralyzes the mind, the body, the soul. No more Kunta Kinte. You got TOBY now! Don't worry because he don't need those metal chains anymore. Same Mask, same "dynamic" of self-enslavement. Instead of the natural curiosity and drive to go after Life and learn of its greater possibilities - there is a fear of life, and self-imposed limitations. The same fear that immobilizes and paralyzes. That Fear of Freedom. Sacrificed is the natural fiery, streaming desire for life, love, learning, thinking, playing creating. Sacrificed is self-esteem, self-confidence, will power, risk-taking, creative and critical thinking and a natural desire for sociality. Here we are talking about the very undeveloped capacities necessary to fight successfully for freedom and happiness.

We still carry that character mask of Slave Mentality today. We have no developed capacities for truly LIVING (the self-actualizing development towards a full-humanness), and so, no true durable STRUGGLE capacities. We, as revolutionaries, are as neurotic as anyone else in this society. It is a mass neurosis, a mass sickness, and we are a part of THE MASSES. The personality problems that stem from those early traumatic experiences don't get exposed and resolved for our betterment merely by reading and taking on new beliefs. No matter how militant, scientific or moral. What we're doing is merely piling, PILING more stuff ON TOP of problems already caused by a poor uprooting of racism, sexism and authoritarianism per se inside of us. IT IS A GHETTO INSIDE THERE, and you don't intelligently build a new identity on top of an old, crum-

NEEDING MORE THAN YOU BARGAINED FOR

We need so much more than the ”science” of Capitalist Economics, Pan-Africanism, Socialism, Spirituality, guerrilla warfare, etc., to enrich our understanding of the problems of human bondage and self-enslavement. No matter how effective the Mask in enslaving us to the habits, obsessions, ways of thinking, relating and reacting we can destroy it and restructure a whole new identity or character. We have available the kind of analytical and ”self-actualizing” psychologies to help us produce that gut-wrenching revolution of The Soul. Here rests and operates that ”inner social dynamic” which automatically makes each of us work to fail, to FAIL in carrying out one's own and one's group's most righteous of intentions and endeavors. We need to develop, to self-develop the kind of liberating habits and ways of thinking/feeling/willing/working required to help us succeed in Life in general and in Revolution in particular.

How can people who have been the target of what has been the most effective and dam-near total psychological domination BY THEMSELVES create the conditions and processes for Freedom? For an inner freedom that is a necessary preparation for building the kind of clear, diverse, national revolutionary movements for changing this whole society?

First is by realizing that in this today's phase of scientific capitalism, the repressive (psychic) domination and (social) administration of society becomes an advanced ”1984” -scientific, productive and total. When Malcolm X spoke of their powers to manipulate us and have us thinking that our true friends were our enemies, and vice-versa, even he knew deep the manipulation reached into our very souls. It went deep enough to make us think that we were doing our own thinking and acting. And Malcolm had only penetrated THE TIP of the iceberg.

vibrant, responsive, honest, curious, sensuous, logical rational and crazy. You fear not new things or people; you fear not adventure or trying new activities; you don't become stuck in anxieties or depressive moods; nor worry about what others think about you.

You are open, receptive and geared to nothing else but Life itself and all its pleasure and struggle. You are just a wellspring of energy to love, to learn and to act.

Every day, every minute and every experience in the life of a child is one of curiosity and a powerful drive to learn … about things, people, self. Those eyes are bright, observant. Those hands and arms, legs and feet are moving and touching, reaching. That child, every child - a natural explorer! Eyes, mouth, ears, hands, senses. Not only does s/he learn and do from seeing, hearing, touching, feeling, tasting the objects of its surrounding reality. They also learn about themselves and the use of the capacities of eyes, ears. Hands, legs, feet, tongue, muscles, sexual organs, thinking and feeling and the whole ”humanimal” range. In other words, they are on the road - naturally - to self-discovery, in its totality and on his/her own terms. Self and surroundings are ONE. But …

These days or years of ”born freedom” are not going to last long in our culture. Our society is not geared nor interested in nurturing human development on the basis of natural freedom. It is geared to develop us on the basis of Authority - class, race, sex, age, etc. The need to OBEY, rather than the need to BE, is the over-riding concern. This is what makes ”childhood” as we had it imposed on us, an oppressive institution. Good ole Western, U.S. child-rearing is an innocent-appearing good-intentioned Fire-Extinguisher used to put out a fine, sweet, bright and wildly burning human flame, in the person of an Uncivilized, unADULTerated child. And let it be said again and again, so that there'll be no misunderstanding: The groundbreakers, the spirit-breakers or foundation builders of this pillar of psychological loyalty to the social system is the Family,

Parents, Brothers, Sisters and other relevant figures tied to your immediate surroundings.

It is not that the child must not be taught or "raised" - it is the Why's and How's and what actual characteristics are being produced in us by our addiction to the traditions and beliefs that keep them alive. We are born into a society which has been in existence for several hundred years, complete with its own established way of life, life philosophy and institutions for perpetuating its existence via education and other political power institutions. Its basic ways and beliefs, as in terms of sexual and class relationships - the why's and how's - have roots going back 6 to 10 thousand years. One insignificant, tee-ii-iny baby, coming into the world knowing nothing of it and at the complete Ômercy' of other people to care for it, cannot contend with society's tremendous and awe-some cultural forces.

When society grabs hold of that child, it becomes a nonsensical one-sided battle: the Social Imposition -vs- the Natural Requirements. The former is geared towards molding you to fit a predetermined work, race, sex, age role, or roles that serve a set status quo or totem pole. If you are born into the bottom, then tuff. You will be raised in a manner appropriate to it. The social requirements for growth are tied to serving a Power Structure for ruling class, sexist and racist goals. The latter, is geared towards your need to "be", to be in a process of "being", discovering yourself in potentials and capacities through unadulterated interactions and interdependencies between you and your social world. Child -vs- Society? Natural -vs- Social? The Living, vibrating, flickering flame of life -vs- the fire extinguishing, repressive, life-deadening Mask? Poor child - Poor ADULT: both losers!

Where the child first lived with an abundant spring of energy, with emotional honesty, absorbing curiosity and a general openness to life per se, parents and other cultural forces have caused him/her to self-create, self-shape and self-fasten a Mask over the abundantly enlivening, human developmental

belief. For this, you must start BY EXAMINING YOUR OWN DAM SELF!

This is why the point is being stressed that child-rearing, as we practice it, is a mechanism of personality- or character-structure formation. Put another way, it is plain ole SPIRIT-BREAKING. In particular, it is a source of our most enduring, stubborn and persistent personality problems all through the course of one's life. And before someone forgets, this is specifically concerned with THOSE OF US WHO ARE ACTIVISTS, REVOLUTIONARIES, in SELF-OPINION. Why? Because we are the ones out on Front Street talking about (and trying to) educating The Masses and organizing them to enter into a revolution. We are also the main ones to land in prison, graveyards, psycho-wards or survive under the most dangerous conditions due to our commitment to "take on" this System.

As we are now, we are NOT ready, and primarily because we've successfully avoided that NUMBER ONE CONFRONTATION of SELF, of our personal problems hidden under a pile of revolutionary (and/or religious) theory and belief systems, aggressive posturing and political hatreds. It is in opening ourselves up to this that we need to demonstrate real, concrete COURAGE. Getting out on Front Street declaring a new Revolutionary Party or Army, the squeezing of a trigger, the taking off of a bank, dope dealer, pig, charging into kkklan demonstrations, whatever the obsession with physical, combative activities - they are quite secondary to the kind of GUT-WRENCHING, NERVE-WRECKING inner changes we need to make to DE-CONDITION ourselves from psychological loyalty to this oppressive system. The wrenching off of the Mask is preparatory and inescapable IF we are to eventually be successful in realizing our high verbally expressed goals.

the curtain goes up,

and everybody's playing a part..

This is the result of Coping without ever being conscious of the process we are going through.

The Mascarade - everybody has their particular mask, a psychological or character mask that is UNWITTINGLY created by the child's reactive attempts to deal with the traumatic experiences of a culture imposing itself on that child. That mask is the NUMBER ONE block to freedom, in the psychic and social sense. It serves to bind up and distort the righteous streamings of living energy into socially acceptable, pathological thinking, feeling and acting … characterizing a society oriented to race-ism, class-ism, sex-ism, imperial-ism, profit-hunger, war and other anti-humanistic tendencies.

CAN'T IGNORE THE "PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION"

We'll be able to understand, in greater depth, the problems that block Revolution in this country when we are more willing and daring to learn about the psychological dimension, or that dynamic aspect of the Mask. It is what one perceptive activist referred to as "self-inflicting psychological oppression." It arose from a discussion of the ways in which people in general, and activists, in spite of their high self-opinions, perpetuate the very society oppressing them by holding on to the ideas, opinions, beliefs, addictions, attitudes, gestures, relationships and established traditions that make this National Life powerful and workable for the Rich and already Powerful. To understand this, to make an honest attempt to understand this, you must step out of the obsession with The Masses, or with proving studiousness and loyalty to a particular ideology or

energies. The dynamic aspect of these human energies is that they are always life-affirming, freedom-bound, pleasurable and empowering, that is when one is not caused to fear their streamings and unfoldings. The dynamic aspect of the Mask is just the opposite of the "free spirit." This person is trapped in fear of deeply-felt life, of self-determination, of pleasure, of personally powerful wholeness. The person who is caused to fear those genuine outward positive streamings of human energies - under the cultural imposition of life-deadening, repressive beliefs and practices - maintains a mechanical split within him/herself between feeling and thought, emotion and intellect, intuition and reason, nature and culture.

When this person "comes up" under such a setting, the adaptive aspects of human biology causes him/her to form character or personality structures trapped and addicted to the very oppressive "life" s/he has come to accept as "natural." Given are the basics of vocabulary, behaviors, rules, morals, bias, etc. from which you learn to express, re-enforce and reproduce a rigid split in mind/body/soul according to socially approved standards.

Whether conscious of it or not, the person accustomed to, and receptive to , the society's authoritarian beliefs and traditions, does not normally challenge her/himself to affirm those "anti-social" deeply-felt feelings or longings for unADULTerated life. The beliefs and traditions do not challenge the person to consciously allow his/her sexual, emotional, intellectual and physical seeds to develop in a more natural, less culturally oppressive way. And it is rare the person who will allow the Rebel Fire of Life within to be channeled into the human developmental forms that are indicative of personal and social freedom, consciousness, responsibility and happiness. It is even rarer the person who will know HOW to follow the faintest or strongest "inklings" and desires to be free or change the circumstances of life as s/he knows or has known it.

NICE LIES - PAINFUL TRUTHS

Home (or family), church, school, peers, etc. have the function in common of causing the child or person to restrict and distort the living physical, intellectual and emotional expressions of that dynamic, charging energy of life, of Freedom within. It is done in the nice-sounding names of "civilization", "God," proper upbringing, Education, Manhood, Citizenship and the American Way.

Take the home. Just as we say that Prison is but a "microcosm" of society in general, so too is the Home. Home is that part of society which is first entrusted with the mission, or responsibility of molding us into what the Ruling Order has defined and instituted as acceptable. Those cultural forces converge upon each human being at the youngest of age. At such a period the person is helpless, defenseless as the "Spearhead" of these molding forces are the members of the family within the institution of the home.

The early distortion of our naturally positive drives and pure feelings with morals, taboos, nice lies, scaring lies, compulsory duties, repressive religious and secular adherence, racism, sexism … frustrates, twists and distorts the natural, positive life functioning of the infant. It makes both child-life and adult-life miserable, frustrating. Each person comes to develop a plasticness or front of being, of trying to be nice, polite, obedient, civil. Each person tries to "cope"; some become abusive and rebellious. None understand what makes them repress and deny that child-like "innocence" which is a purity and openness to Life's inner and outer forms.

That front becomes a seemingly permanent fixture containing and expressing Life-denying fears, hatreds, worries and inhibitions inside. All or most of our character or personality problems in later adult life stem from these childhood oppressions that were never brought to consciousness, and understood, in order to be resolved in the interest of that person's

on. It should be obvious now that the foundation for the perpetuation of Status Quo, Power Structure … is laid AT HOME. It is the actions, and beliefs guiding those actions, of parents and other significant social figures in our lives which cause the child to conform, in psychological loyalty, to the very kind of oppressive regime which exterminates, extinguishes the potent, streaming energy of Life within. In other words, you have learned to contain, repress or even virtually completely extinguish that wellspring of freedom burning within you. We are prisoners of our own upbringing.

PSYCHIC IMPRISONING BY CULTURE

To teach us to repress ourselves in the name of Respect and Obedience to Authority (parents, preachers, teachers, principals, police, politicians, etc) DEHUMANIZES us. If a child is forbidden to express his/her feelings, explore her/his potentials, s/he will never be able to unfold freely in a rich and joyous life … OR in a life of Revolution dreaming, creating, destroying, healing, contesting, renewing … The social repression and its learned self- repression is going to negatively affect his/her concept of self and her/his ability to relate positively to self, others and environment with a sense of freedom and responsibility through love, work and critical reflection. The reactions to those traumatic or fearful events in one's earlier life has armored one's psychological make-up against the Natural, the Instinctual.

Our self-concept is, and has been, continually bombarded with negative experiences and subliminal messages which leave us with the feelings of insignificance, self-hatred, helplessness, powerlessness, and lifelessness. The way we learn to cope with it is by THE MASCARADE. Remember the song,

> The stage is set,

You aint grown yet, girl!

You don't tell ME what-chu gonna do.

I'm yo' Father! I'm yo' Mama!

You're gonna OBEY me, dammit!

Just wait till your Father gits home!

And then once you've learned to shut your mouth and not express your self in natural manners, the emotions come out in soundless physical gestures that HIDE your true thoughts and feelings. But even the Physics of it is an apt indication to "experienced" parents that you are STILL rebellious. That you have learned to HIDE the truth within you at an early age shows that you are learning the more "advanced" and subtle ways to , personally and socially, control yourself. This is a shame because it means you are learning to be other than, OTHER THAN your true self! Think back.

What-chu got yo' dam lip poked out for?

Better put-cho lip back in before I put it in For you!

I hear you pouting and you better stop!

You stay right here and if I see one tear umma really give you something to cry for!

What kind of upbringing is this? What are its consequences for the child, in its childhood AND its adulthood? It is an AUTHORITARIAN UPBRINGING, one designed to instill FEAR of those human elements in society who are recognized as POWERS. The child has NO RIGHTS that a Parent or Adult is bond to respect. The black man has not rights that the White Man is bound to respect. The worker has no rights that the Boss is bound to respect. The female has no rights that the Male is bound to respect. The colonized has no rights that the Colonizing Powers are bound to respect. And the examples could go

psychic, biological, social, and communal health. No matter what the endeavor, these person problems affect the process and outcome of all we did, do and will do, mostly without our ever realizing or being conscious of its relationship.

The reason why even revolutionaries -or sincere-meaning people who get involved with movements - cannot change their social circumstances is because they do not recognize or just deny the existence of powerful unconscious, self-enslaving emotional habits, thought patterns and defense-mechanisms WITHIN THEM that overwhelms the best and most righteous of intentions and endeavors to change society. This is the inner social dynamic of the Mask whose function it is to frustrate and repress the vast potential of each and every human being to be free and wholly alive.

Look at this process of mask-forming, role-fitting, and chronic frustration and distortion of the human being's living energy into conforming behavior, from another angle.

The painful but inescapable truth is that our "homes" are like kennels or prison-factories where Mama and Papa raise us pretty much like dogs. Yes, they "loved" us and all, BUT … More time and energy is put into trying to (and mostly succeeding) DOMESTICATE us, than with actually raising, nurturing good healthy life-affirming qualities. Children's humanness, their naturalness is not respected. That, especially, which makes us so unique, apart from all other species, is not respected: our very human emotions and intellect. Even our basic biological needs and natural rhythms are subject to mechanical, pseudo-scientific measure. Early the child is being forced into submitting to authoritarianism.

It starts with such seemingly meaningless things as feeding and teaching the child to "cooperate"; cleaning or bathing and teaching the child to be still and "cooperate"; peepeeing and dodoing and potty-training the child; teaching the child ONE perspective of life - YOURS; teaching sexist, racist and other shit whose message is to be "loyal" to Authority. It is here that

the saying ”Action speaks louder than words” is relevant. The overt and subtle messages come across to the memory more through people's actions, their behavior. For example, parents don't sit a child down and actually say, ”You are the Inferior One because of your age, sex, and race.” It is given from the daily behavior of parents and significant others. Again, it is not that the child must not be raised or taught - it is the Why and How behind it.

The infant can naturally signal hunger and should have her hunger satisfied then. But Mama, many times, ignores this and forces the baby to comply with what's convenient for Mama, or with some so-called scientifically worked out time schedule for feeding. When this happens the baby is being put through some heavy trauma. That baby is not ”scientific” nor so rigid. S/he is an organism of natural rhythm and needs, of harmonious instincts and pure feelings.

The authoritarian manner of forcing a child to COMPLY, to CONFORM, to SUBMIT to a rigid schedule instead of its natural rhythm an signaling, or to force him/her to eat when they're not hungry, or to strap a child to a high-chair and let him sit there until he ”learns” how to eat CIVILIZED, is cruel punishment. But even in this example, it is done supposedly on the child's behalf - for the child's own good. It is one example of a ”nice lie” honestly believed in by parents, but based on old myths and new scientific” myths.

What about the child's FEELINGS? Or does it matter? What about the harm done to the child's nascent sense of self and potential for self-determination? This is what is crucial here. In the place of a possible healthy, lively, free self-hood and self-determination (which could grow naturally under non-oppressive culture or in a fight-back…) comes the first pieces, THE FIRST PIECES of the Mask. And always it is with struggle: the baby cries, kicks, fights … the baby eventually succumbs and loses touch with more and more aspects of that vital fire of life (Self).

In the classic play, Hamlet, it is said: ”God has given you one face, and you make yourself another.” When any oppressive society demands and institutes practices that influences a child's self-repression of his/her own naturalness, in the name of Civilization, or Moral Upbringing, and the like - it is a cruel assault on the very potential and capacity of that human being to be free, whole, alive, loving, strong, curious, and responsible. An assault on being YOU!

THINK BACK

Go on, think back.

Open up that ole hidden chest where those ancient memories are stored. The ones you never had cause to ever think about again. The ones you never knew had such significance or influence on you at present. They aren't all nice memories either. You know that. Many of them evoke anger, hatred, ill-feelings towards those significant persons in your earlier life. But never-the-less, you have got to face them. Think about how those early traumatic experiences, conditioned your development into the kind of person you are today.

Man, if you, as a youngster, spoke out at home and it was directed at your parents or other adults in a manner that wasn't considered ”nice” or ”respectful,” why you were liable to GET THE PISS SMACKED OUTTA YOU. You were liable to get your butt whupped or threatened with a whupping. And it didn't matter, in general, if you had a legit beef, a good point, a concerned interest, or just plain angered by something done to you that YOU perceived as wrong, unjust, or questionable.

By the parents' reaction (including body language and actual verbal expressions) you are taught a lesson that will play on your behavior not only in relation to your parents but with ANY other AUTHORITY FIGURE you deal with.

> You don't talk back to me, boy!